

missin'...

Mapping the Adverse
Child Sex Ratio in India

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from UNDP
for 20/10/03

This brochure captures the decline in the number of girls as compared to boys in India. It presents maps for the reader to understand the worsening conditions of the girl child and shows how the child sex ratio has deteriorated across the country over the last decade.

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How do communities uphold and honour a value system which

India's total population on 1st March 2001 stood at 1.03 billion persons.

With this, India became the second country in the world, after China, to cross the one billion mark. The population of the country rose by 21.34 % between 1991 and 2001. What did not rise, but rather declined shockingly, was the child sex ratio.

The sex ratio at birth is slightly favourable to boys. This means that more boys are born as compared to girls. This is a natural phenomenon. The sex ratio at birth is usually between 940-950 girls per 1000 boys. The child sex ratio is calculated as number of girls per 1000 boys in the 0-6 years age group. In India, however, the 1991 Census reported a child sex ratio of 945 girls per 1000 boys which further declined to 927 during 2001 Census. Over the years, this ratio has fallen from 976 in 1961, to 964 in 1971, and 962 in 1981. A stage may soon come when it would become extremely difficult, if not impossible, to make up for the missing girls. Society needs to recognise this discrimination: girls have a right to live just as boys do. Moreover, missing numbers of either sex, and the resulting imbalance, can destroy the social and human fabric as we know it.

In States such as Haryana, Punjab, Delhi and Gujarat, this ratio has declined to less than 900 girls per 1000 boys. 70 districts in 16 States and Union Territories have recorded a more than 50 point decline in the child sex ratio during the decade 1991-2001. The ratio stands at a mere 770 in Kurukshetra district of Haryana, 814 in Ahmedabad, and 845 in the South West district of Delhi - even though these regions are amongst the most prosperous in the country.

There are reasons to believe that it is increasingly becoming a common practice across the country to determine the sex of the unborn child or foetus and eliminate it if the foetus is found to be a female. This practice is referred to as pre-birth elimination of females (PBEF). PBEF involves two stages: determination of the sex of the foetus and induced termination if the foetus is not of the desired sex. It is believed that one of the significant contributors to the adverse child sex ratio in India is the practice of elimination of female foetuses.

In the Indian context, there is a strong preference for sons. This preference is influenced by many socio-economic and cultural factors, such as the son being responsible for carrying forward the family name and occupation. Sons are desired because they are considered a source of support during old age and for performing religious rites at the time of cremation and subsequently. The practice of dowry and daughters being viewed as 'paraya dhan' (to be married and sent away) is yet another reason why sons are preferred to daughters.

based on son preference and discrimination against the girl?

INDIA

1991





2001



CHILD SEX RATIO

- BELOW 800
- 800-849
- 850-899
- 900-949
- 950 AND ABOVE
- DATA NOT AVAILABLE

NATIONAL AVERAGE 927

In 2001, four states fell in the below 800 category: the situation has become grave in states like Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and Gujarat where the child sex ratio has drastically declined to less than 800 girls for every 1000 boys. As compared to 1991, there are fewer districts marked in green with a child sex ratio of more than 950 girls to 1000 boys.

PUNJAB

1991



*K - Kapurthala

CHILD SEX RATIO

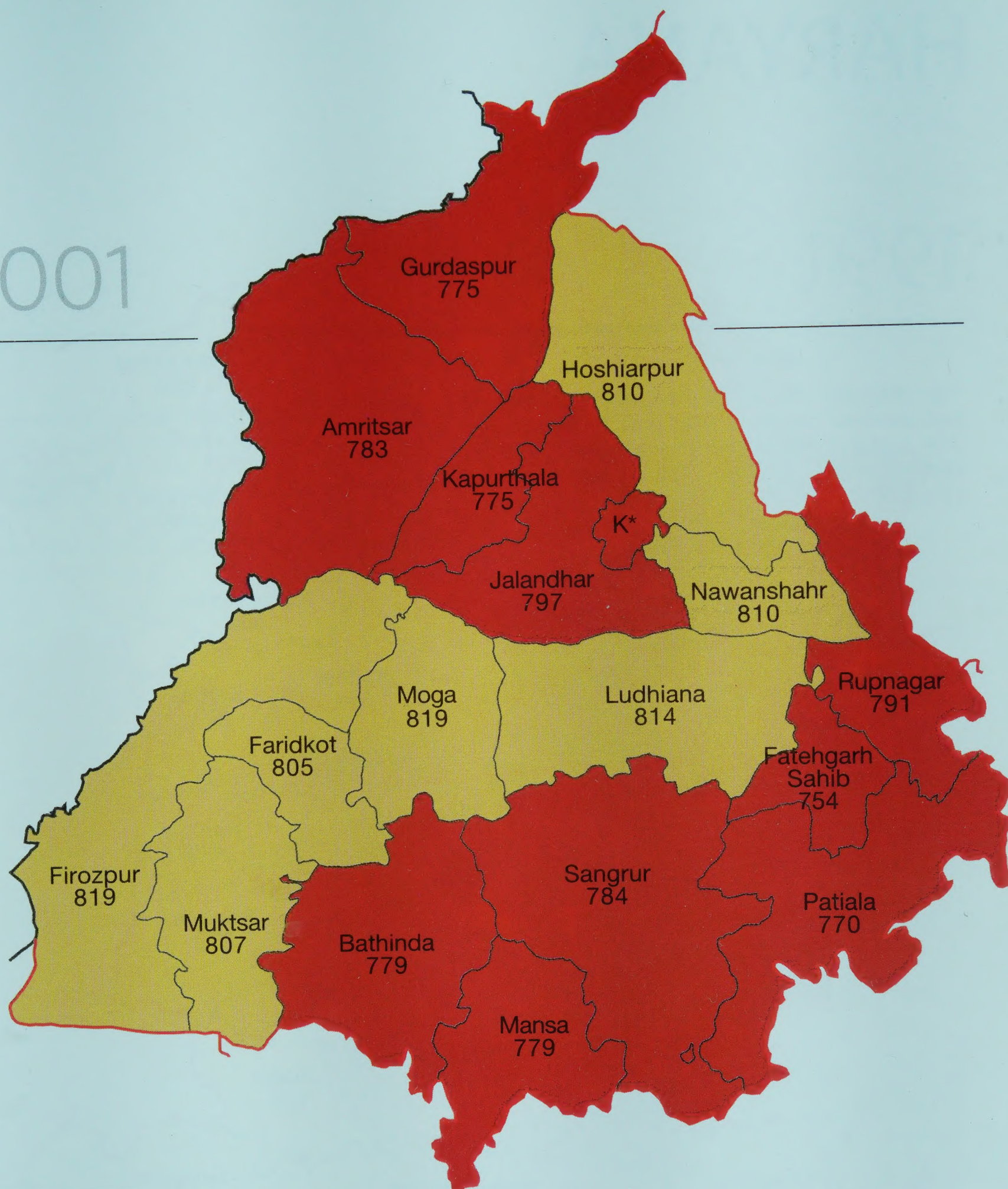
- BELOW 800
- 800-849
- 850-899
- 900-949
- 950 AND ABOVE

STATE AVERAGE 875

All districts in Punjab, except Nawanshahr, recorded a child sex ratio of less than 900 girls to 1000 boys in 1991.

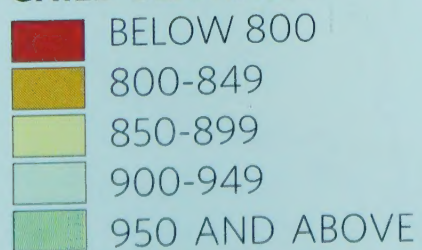


2001



*K - Kapurthala

CHILD SEX RATIO



STATE AVERAGE 793

The situation has further worsened since 1991 with none of the districts recording more than 850 girls per 1000 boys. Infact, 10 of the 17 districts record a drastic reduction in the child sex ratio to less than 800 girls for every 1000 boys. Fatehgarh Sahib has the lowest child sex ratio with merely 754 girls to 1000 boys. What was observed as a trend in 1991 has become a disturbing reality in 2001.

HARYANA

1991

The child sex ratio for all the districts of Haryana had declined to below 900 girls to 1000 boys. The highest child sex ratio was recorded for Gurgaon (895) while the lowest was in Kaithal (854).



CHILD SEX RATIO

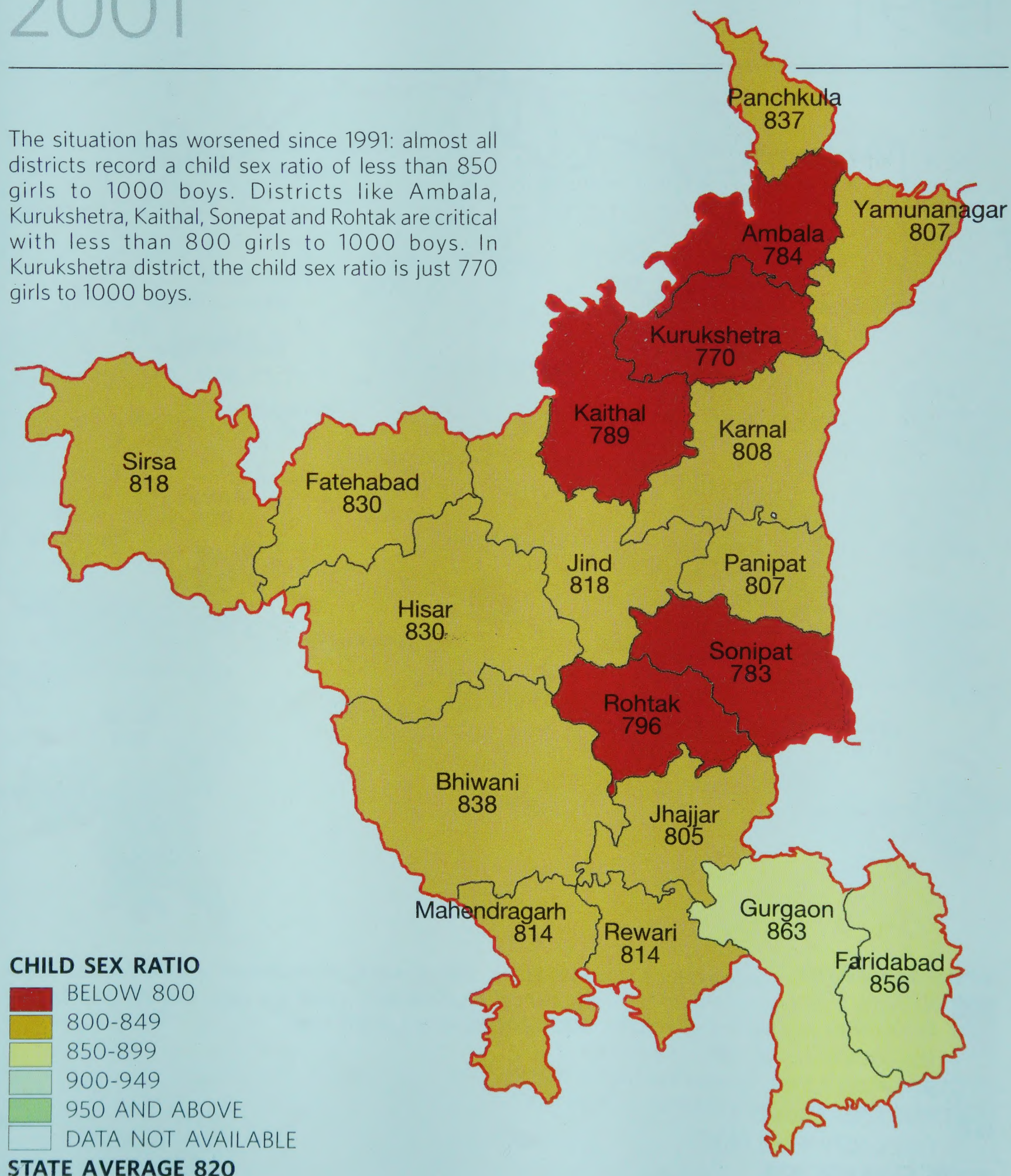
- BELOW 800
- 800-849
- 850-899
- 900-949
- 950 AND ABOVE
- DATA NOT AVAILABLE

STATE AVERAGE 879



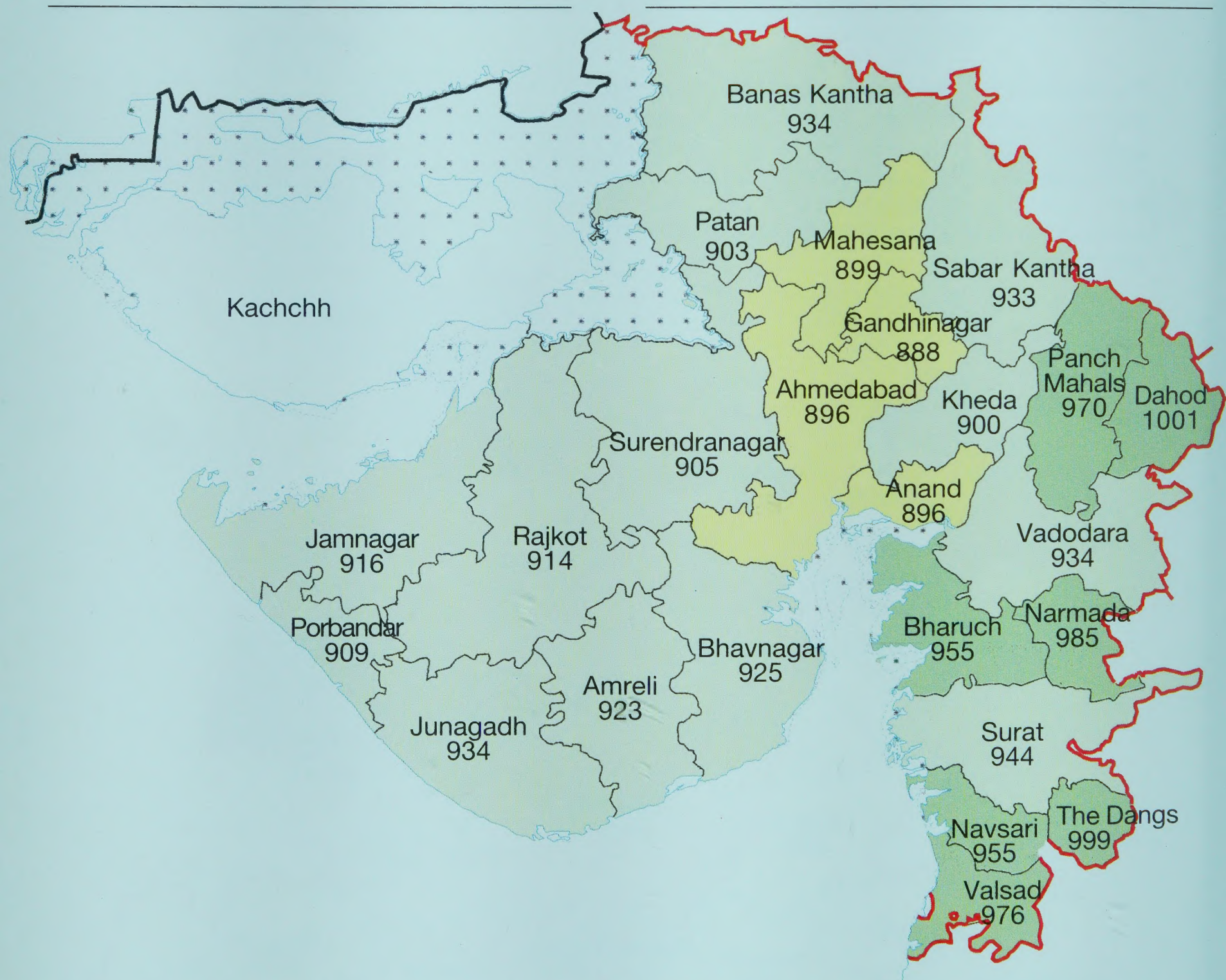
2001

The situation has worsened since 1991: almost all districts record a child sex ratio of less than 850 girls to 1000 boys. Districts like Ambala, Kurukshetra, Kaithal, Sonapat and Rohtak are critical with less than 800 girls to 1000 boys. In Kurukshetra district, the child sex ratio is just 770 girls to 1000 boys.

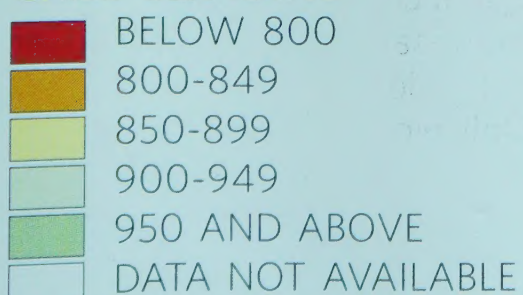


GUJARAT

1991

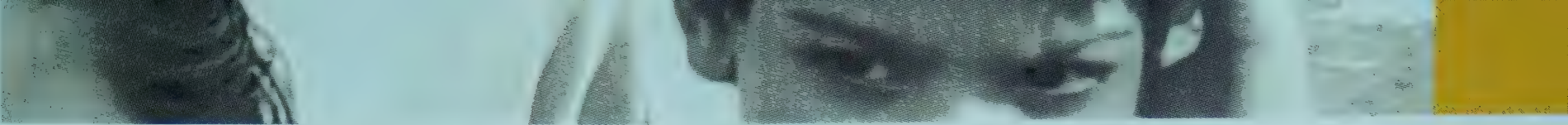


CHILD SEX RATIO

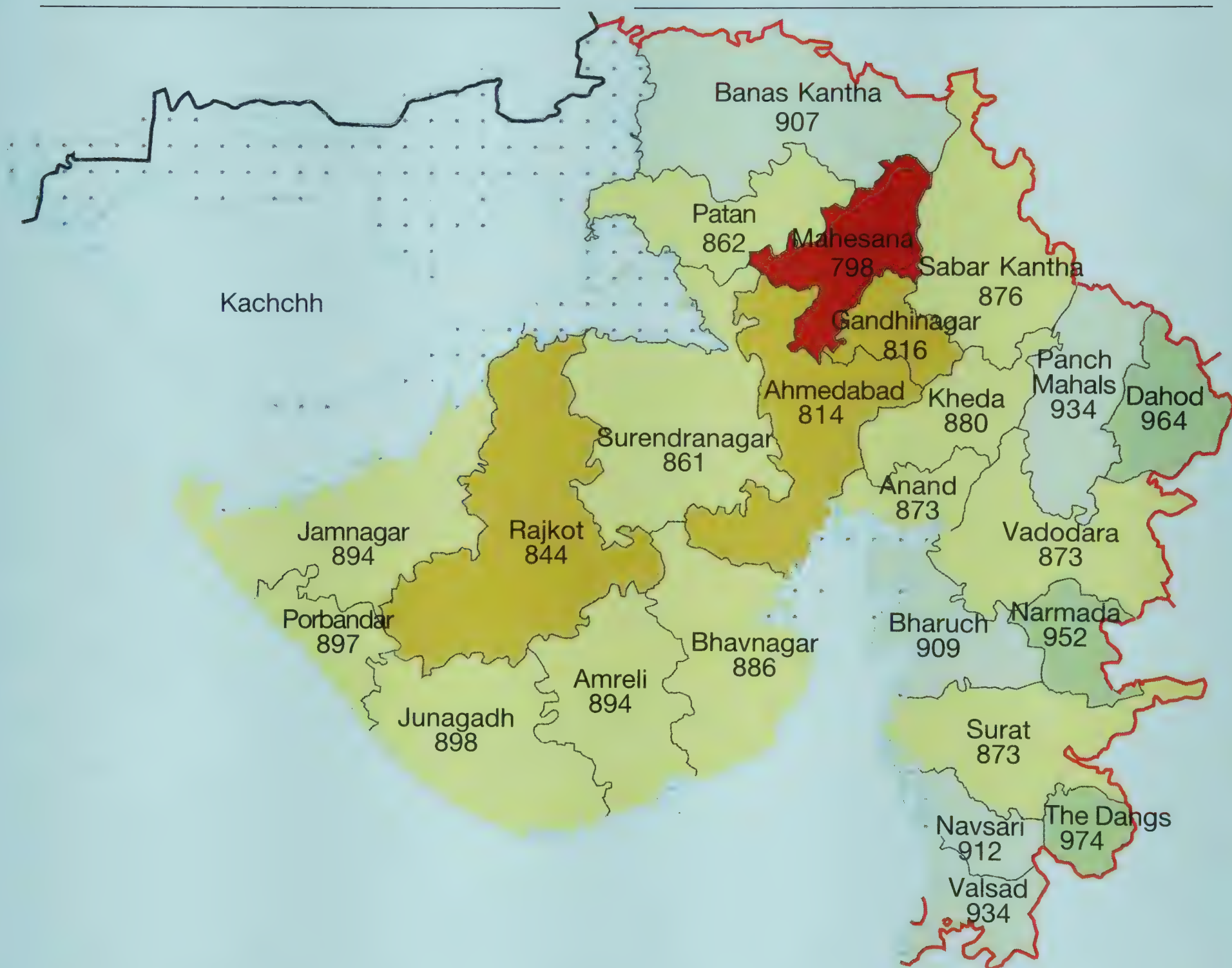


STATE AVERAGE 928

Mahesana, Gandhinagar, Ahmedabad and Anand are seen as critical districts with child sex ratio declining to below 900 girls for every 1000 boys.



2001



CHILD SEX RATIO

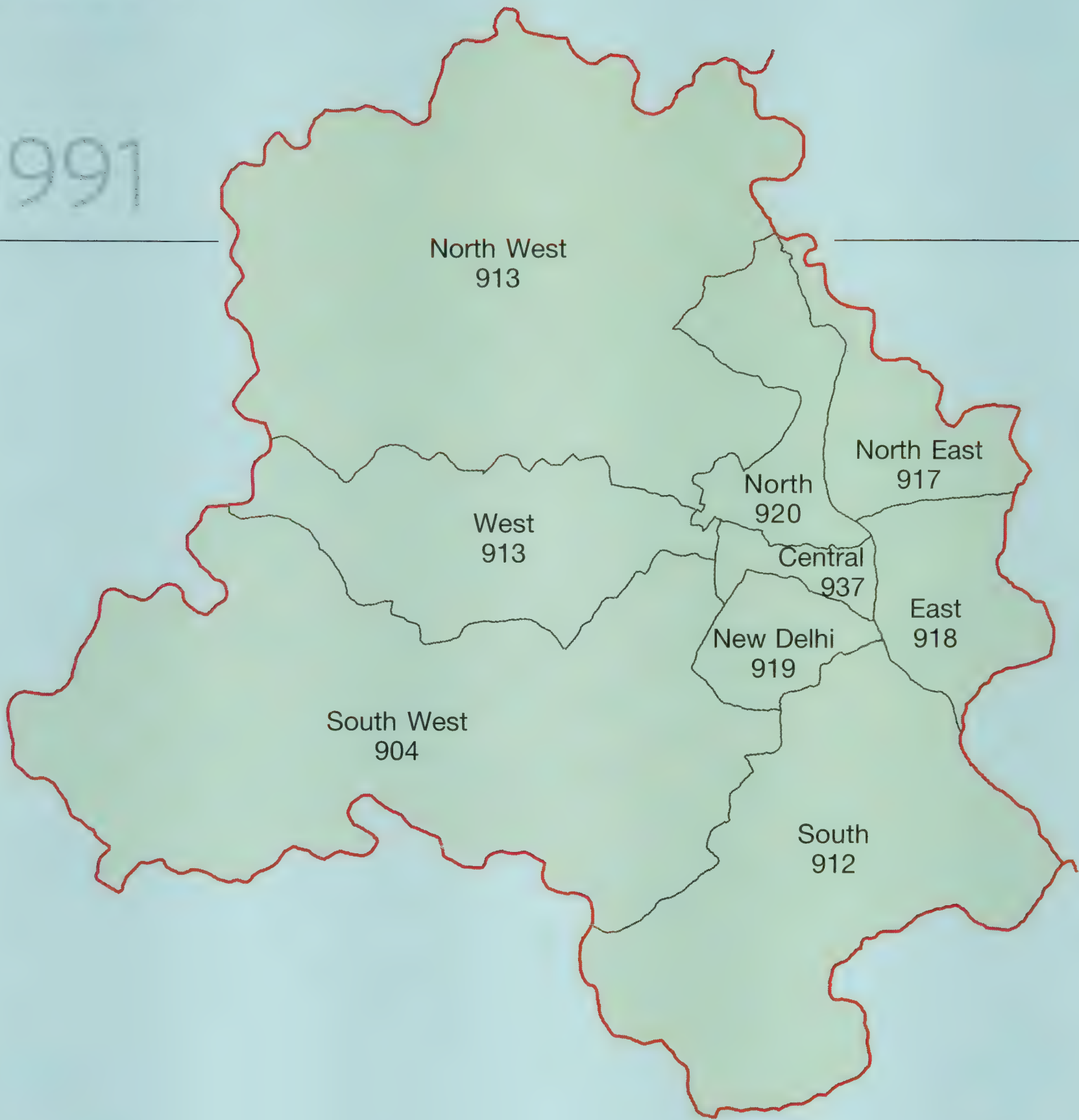
- BELOW 800
- 800-849
- 850-899
- 900-949
- 950 AND ABOVE
- DATA NOT AVAILABLE

STATE AVERAGE 878

Rajkot shows a sudden decline from 914 in 1991 to 844 in 2001. In Mahesana the situation has become worse with a child sex ratio of just 798 girls to 1000 boys. Only eight districts continue to record a child sex ratio of more than 900 girls to 1000 boys as compared to 20 districts in 1991.

DELHI

1991



CHILD SEX RATIO



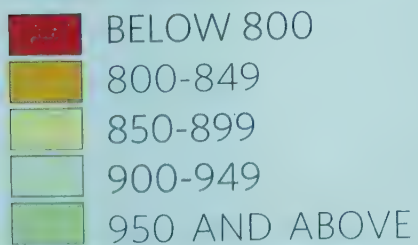
STATE AVERAGE 915

None of the districts in Delhi are seen to have a child sex ratio of less than 900 girls to 1000 boys.

2001



CHILD SEX RATIO

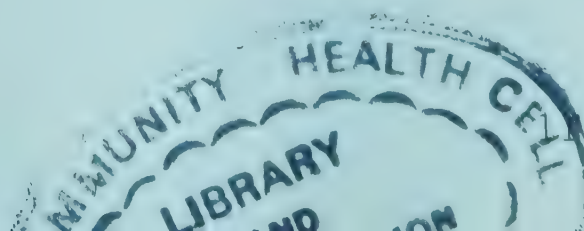


STATE AVERAGE 865

The majority of the districts in Delhi record a child sex ratio of less than 900 girls to 1000 boys. Infact, the South West district, one of the more prosperous districts, records a drastic decline in the ratio: 845 girls to 1000 boys, compared to 904 girls in 1991.

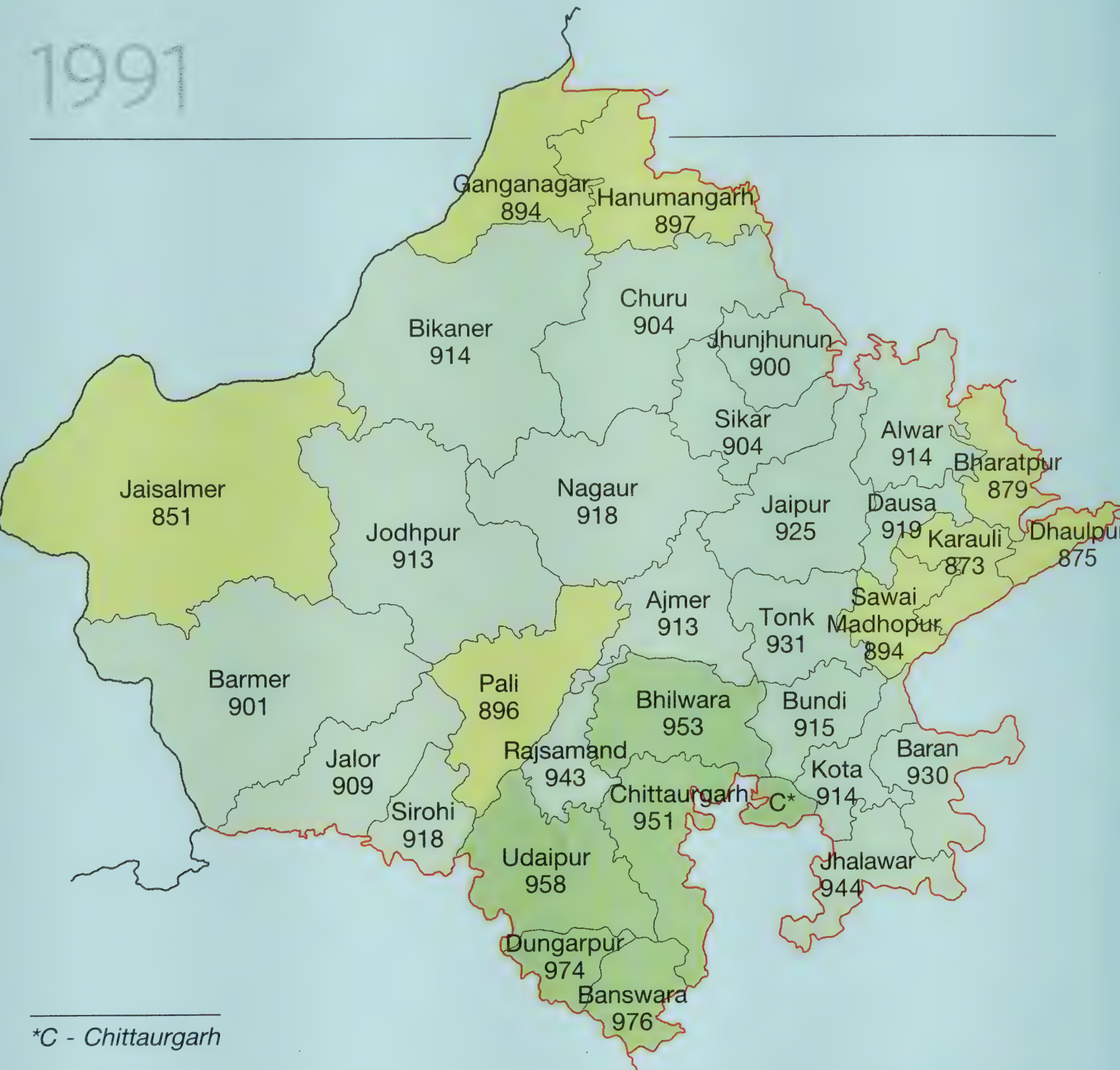
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pg 3



RAJASTHAN

1991



*C - Chittaurgarh

CHILD SEX RATIO

- BELOW 800
- 800-849
- 850-899
- 900-949
- 950 AND ABOVE

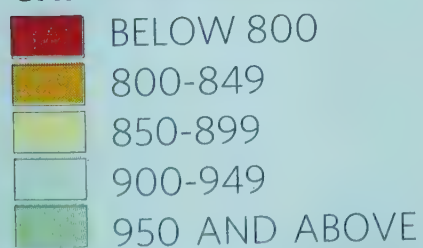
STATE AVERAGE 916

A large part of Rajasthan recorded a declining child sex ratio, ranging from 850 - 950 girls per 1000 boys. The districts of Jaisalmer, Ganganagar, Hanumangarh, Bharatpur, Dhaulpur, Karauli, Sawai Madhopur and Pali were especially critical.

2001



CHILD SEX RATIO

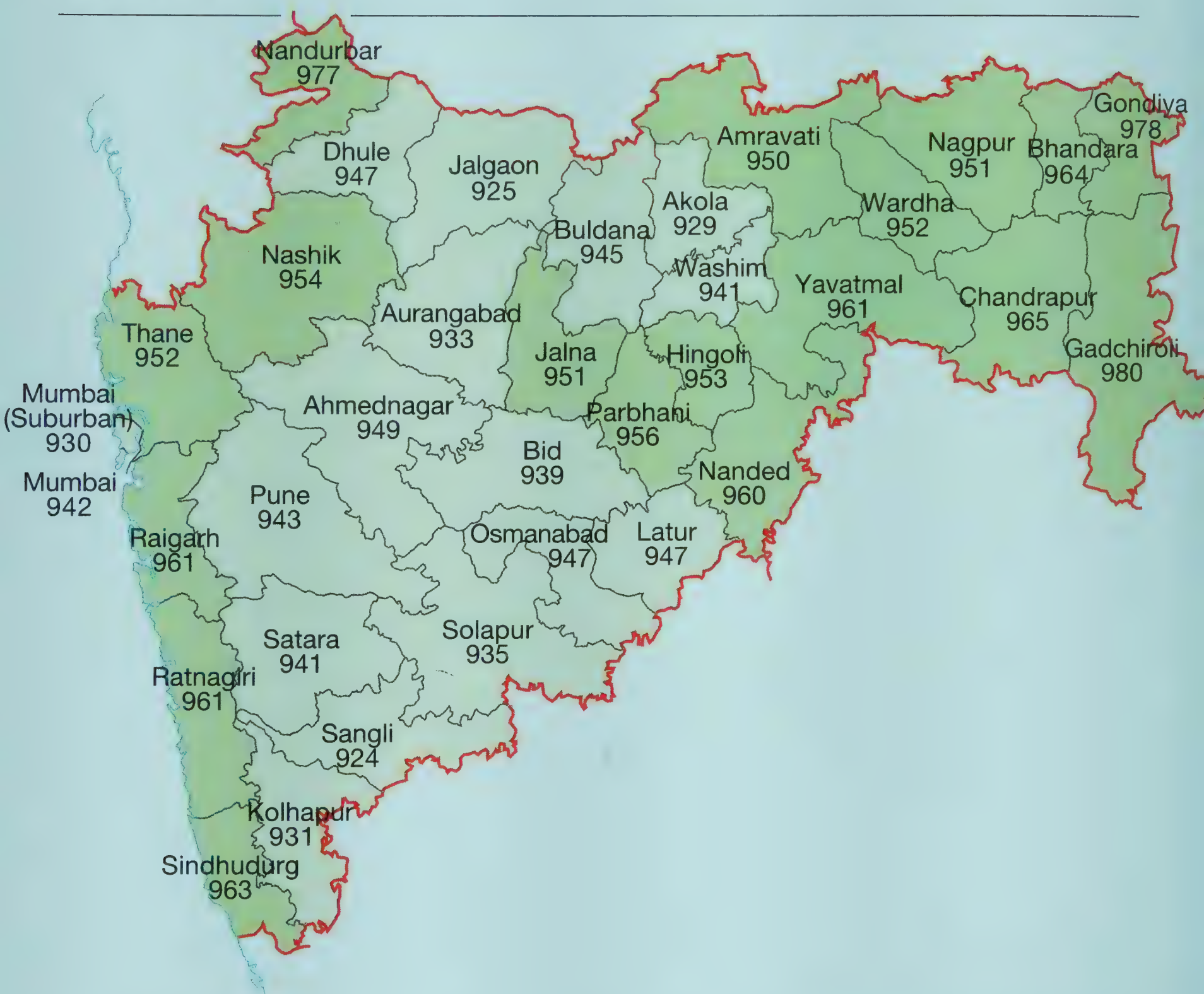


STATE AVERAGE 909

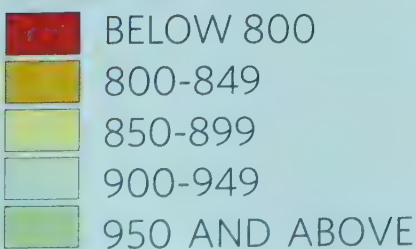
Except for three, all districts in Rajasthan recorded a child sex ratio of less than 950 girls. While the child sex ratio has improved in Sawai Madhopur, it has worsened in the surrounding districts of Alwar, Jhunjhunur, Sikar and Jaipur, which have recorded less than 900 girls to 1000 boys. In Jaisalmer, the child sex ratio has only marginally increased after 10 years, recording 867 girls to 1000 boys as compared to 851 in 1991.

MAHARASHTRA

1991



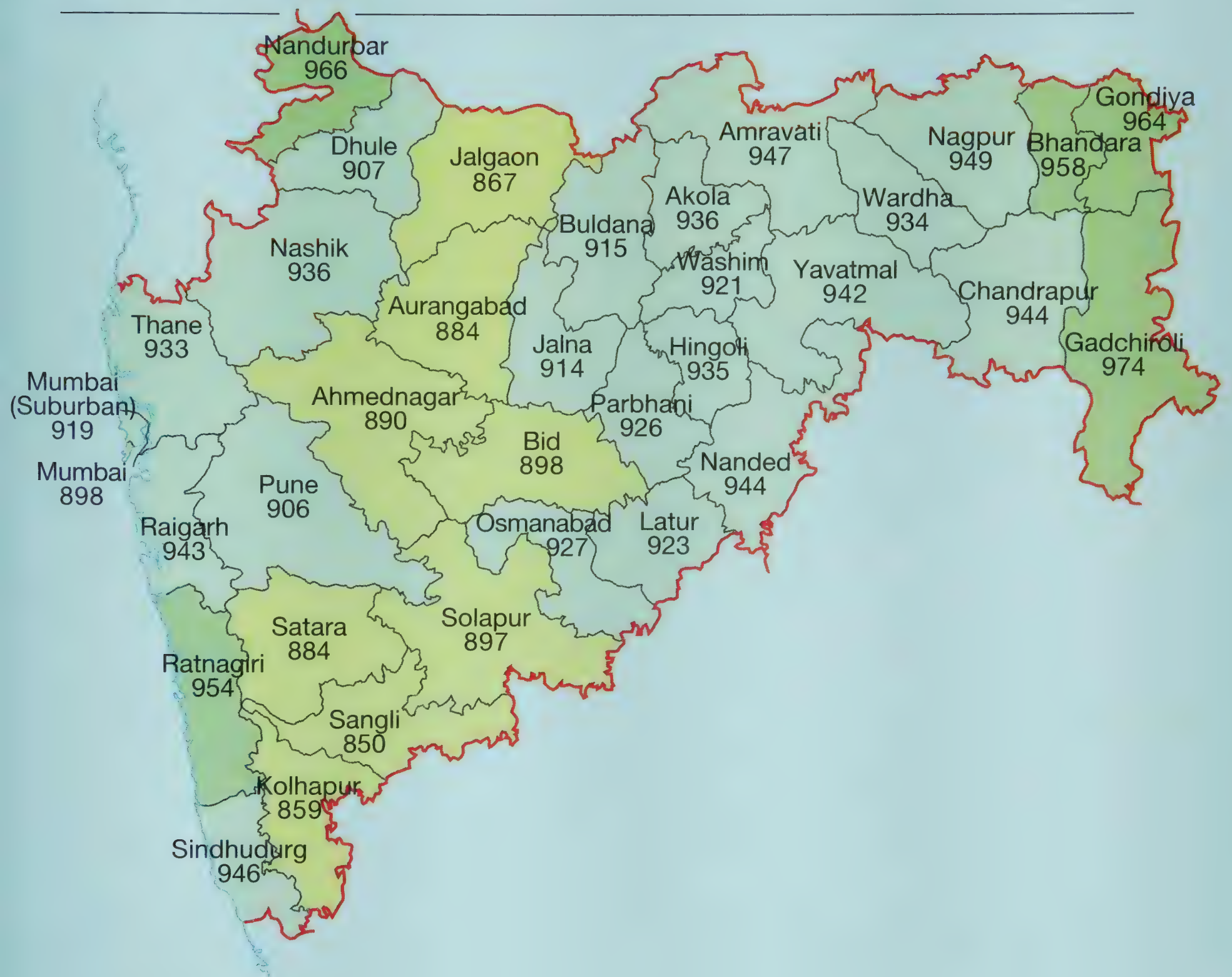
CHILD SEX RATIO



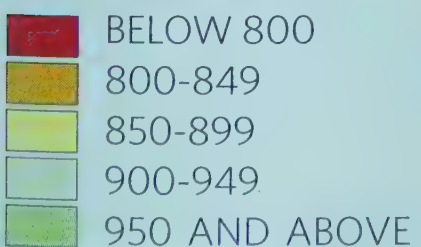
STATE AVERAGE 946

A large number of districts falling in central and southern Maharashtra stretching from Jalgaon to Kolhapur are seen to have a child sex ratio of less than 950 girls to 1000 boys.

2001



CHILD SEX RATIO

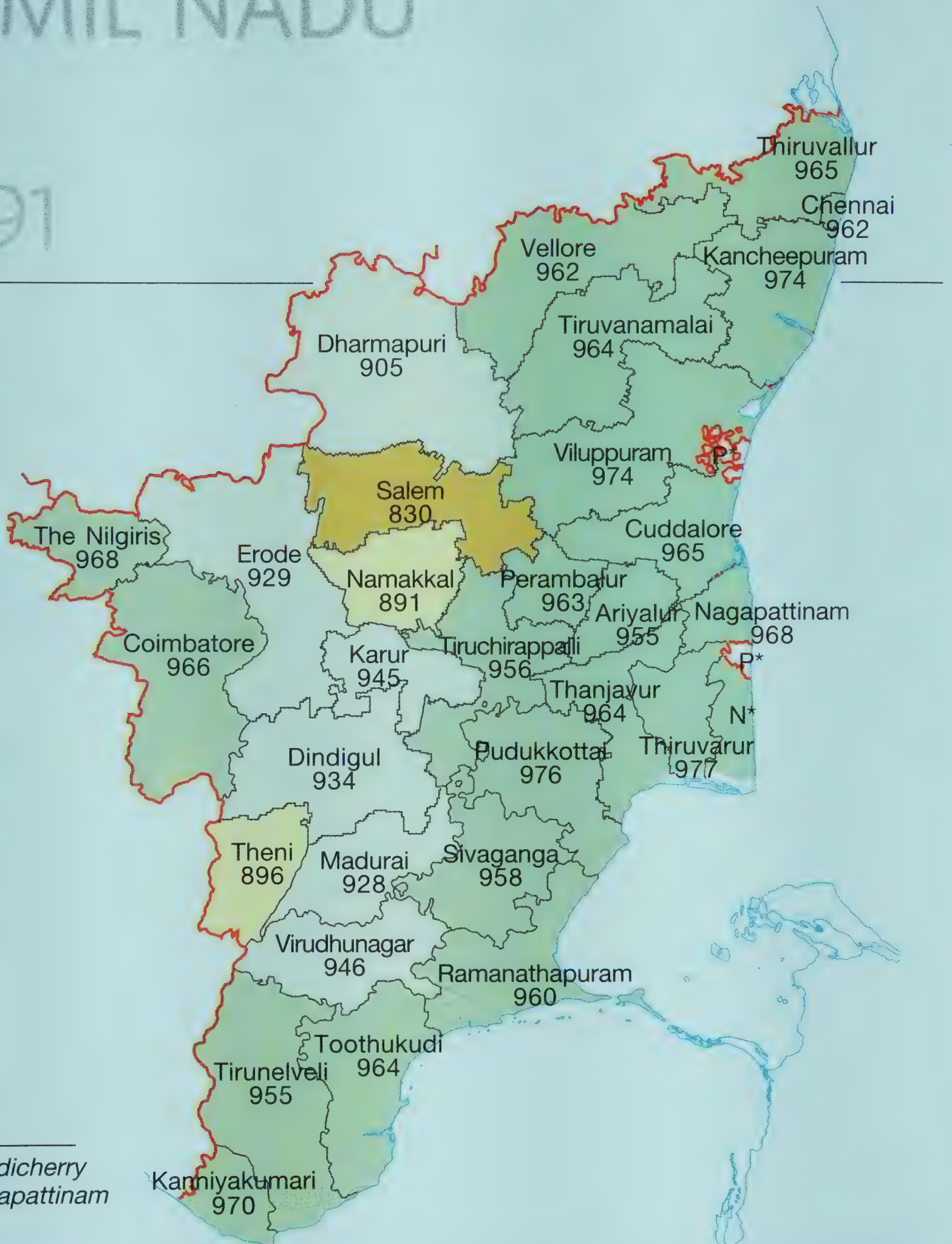


STATE AVERAGE 917

In 2001, the child sex ratio in the same districts of central and southern Maharashtra stretching from Jalgaon to Kolhapur has declined sharply with less than 900 girls to 1000 boys. In the eastern districts of the state, stretching from Jalna to Nagpur the child sex ratio has declined to below 950 girls for every 1000 boys.

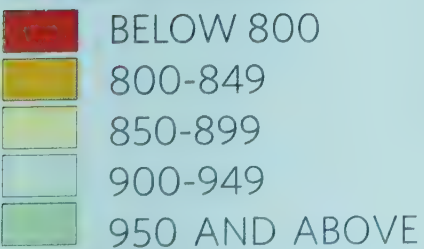
TAMIL NADU

1991



*P - Pondicherry
*N - Nagapattinam

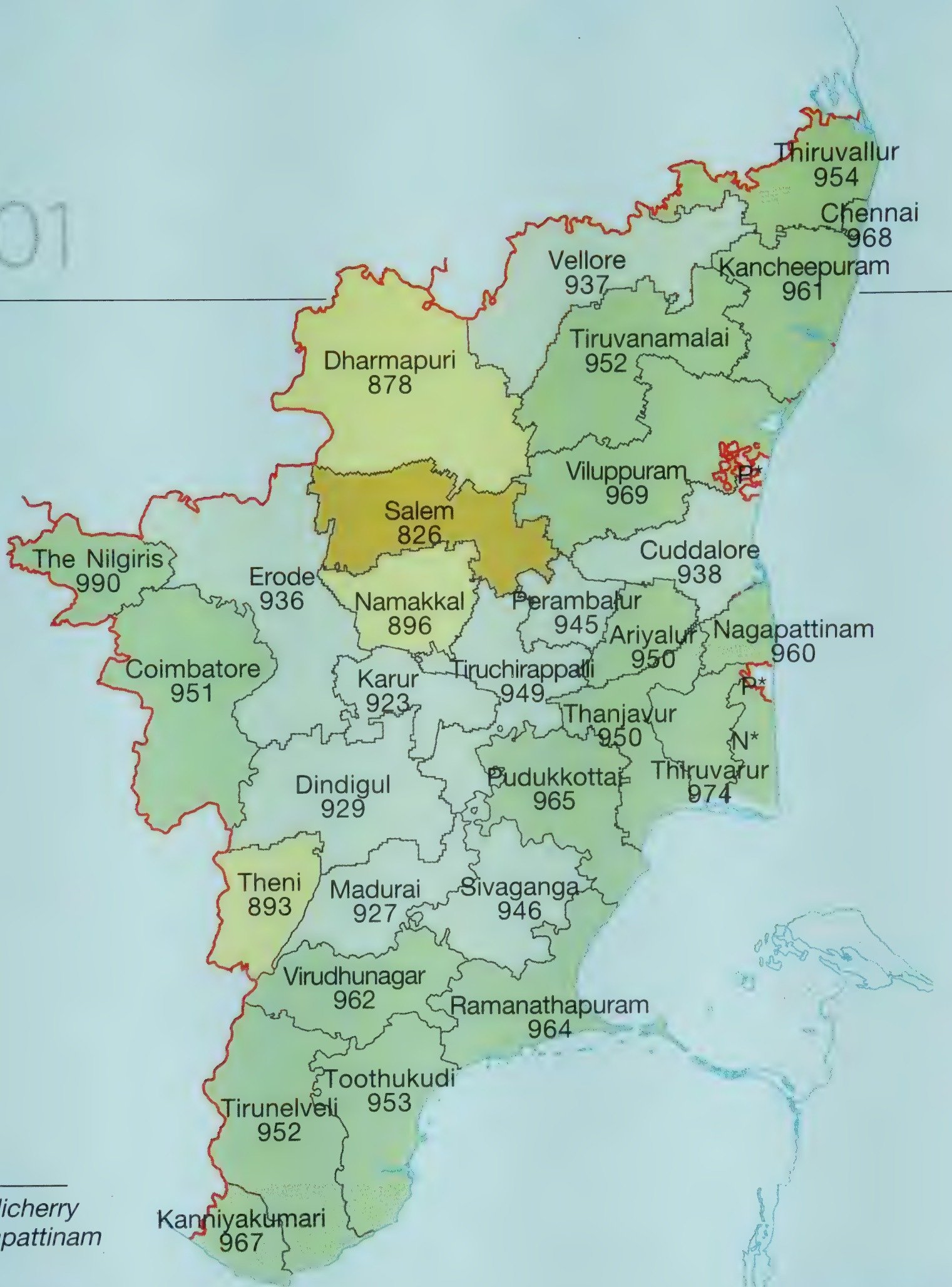
CHILD SEX RATIO



STATE AVERAGE 948

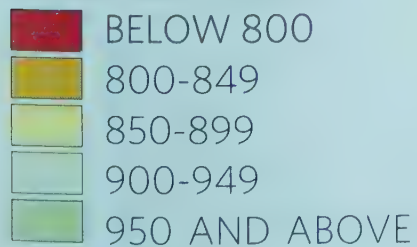
While districts like Dharmapuri, Namakkal, Theni and Madurai are critical, Salem recorded the lowest child sex ratio of 830 girls to 1000 boys.

2001



*P - Pondicherry
*N - Nagapattinam

CHILD SEX RATIO



STATE AVERAGE 939

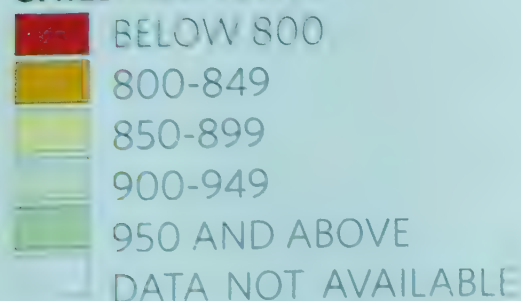
In 2001, the decline in the child sex ratio spread from the epicentre Salem, to other districts of Tiruchirappalli, Perambalur, Cuddalore and Vellore. Moreover, in Salem, the child sex ratio has further declined to 826 girls per 1000 boys.

HIMACHAL PRADESH

1991



CHILD SEX RATIO

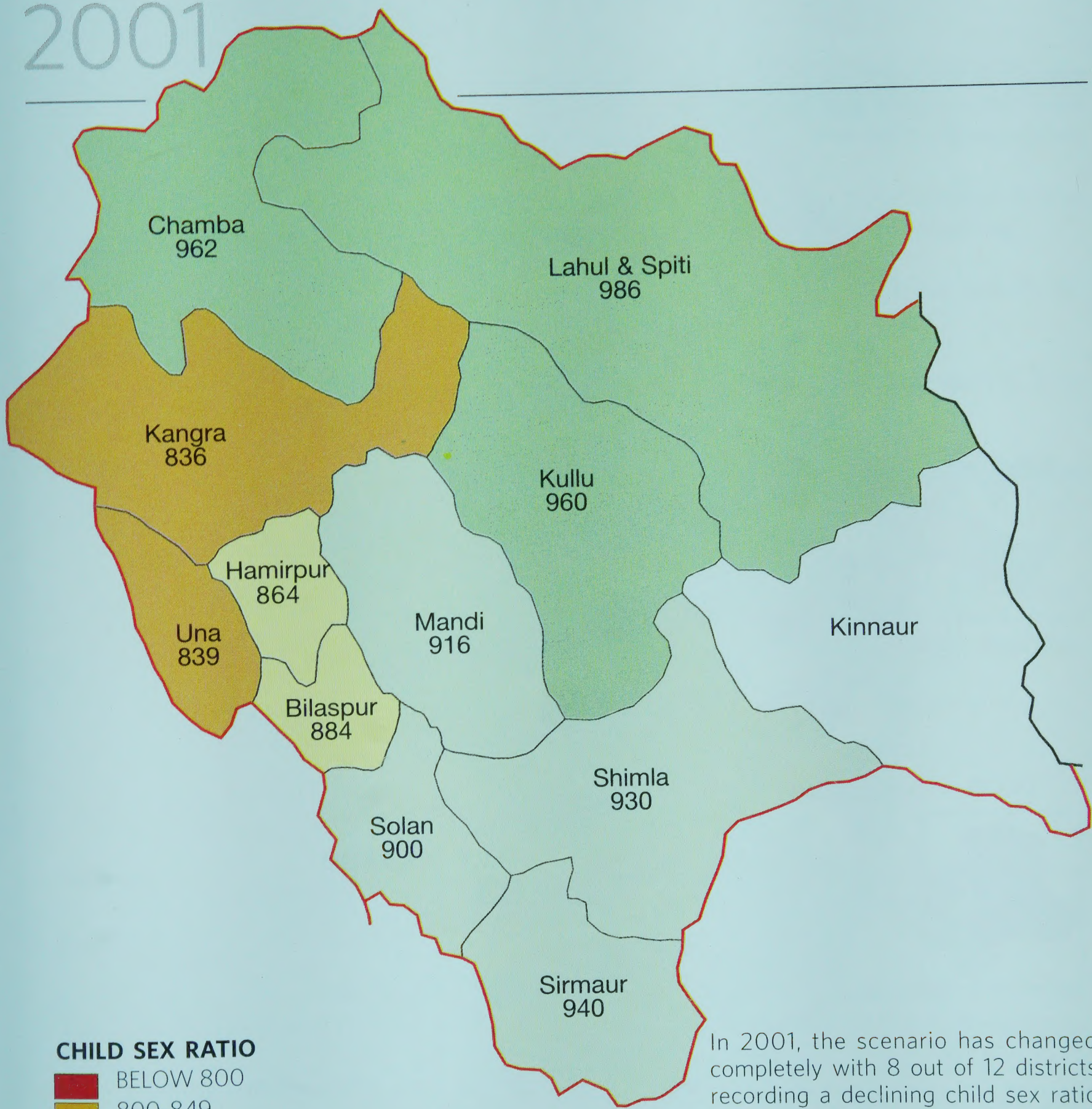


STATE AVERAGE 951

In 1991, a large part of Himachal Pradesh has recorded a normal child sex ratio of more than 950 girls to 1000 boys. A slight decline in the ratio is observed only in the plains districts of Kangra, Hamirpur, Una and Bilaspur. Una and Bilaspur recorded 923 girls to 1000 boys.



2001



CHILD SEX RATIO

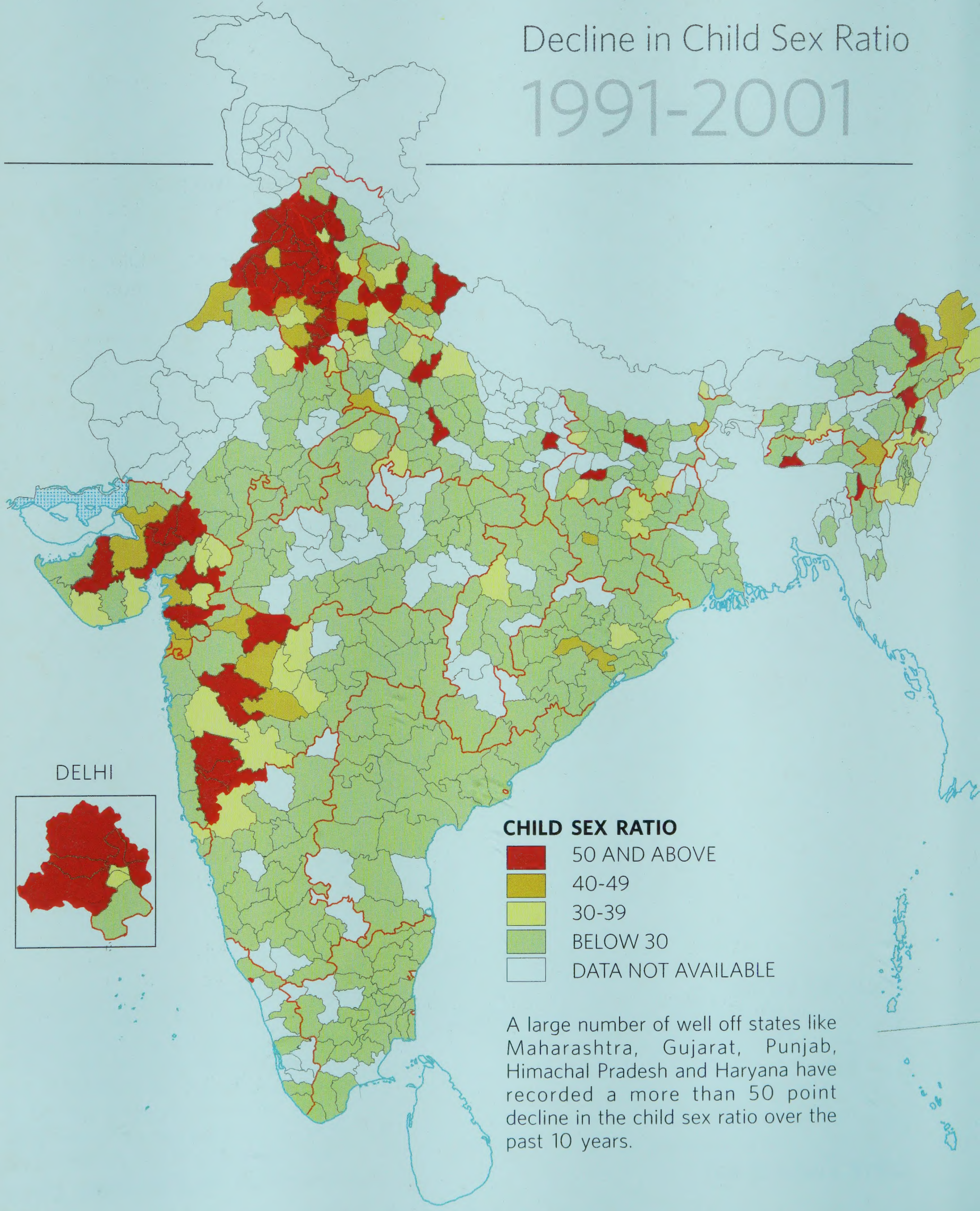
- BELOW 800
- 800-849
- 850-899
- 900-949
- 950 AND ABOVE
- DATA NOT AVAILABLE

STATE AVERAGE 897

In 2001, the scenario has changed completely with 8 out of 12 districts recording a declining child sex ratio of less than 950 girls for every 1000 boys. In particular, the situation in the plains and in the populous districts of Kangra and Una has worsened since 1991, recording 836 and 839 girls respectively per 1000 boys.

INDIA

Decline in Child Sex Ratio 1991-2001



"There's no tradition of having a girl child..."

Ranu, mother of one son, killed her first two children by throttling them within a day of their birth. Both the babies were girls.

Ranu hardly went to school. Married at the age of 18, she gave birth to her first child at the age of 20. She became pregnant 7 times. Two sons died due to illness, two pregnancies were terminated as the foetuses were female, and two infants were killed. One child, a boy, is alive.

Ranu wants another son. She says clearly and firmly that she will kill her other children if they are girls, because she hardly has any money to give them at the time of their wedding.

Ranu's husband, Mukhtar, is a serviceman earning between Rs. 2000-3000 per month. He seems to be indifferent towards the killing of their daughters.

Neither Ranu nor her family members express sorrow on the death of the baby girls as they consider a girl child a 'trouble maker'.

Ranu explains, "The practice of elimination of females continues in some districts of Rajasthan including our village. The girl child is killed by putting a sand bag on her face or by throttling her. It is not a rare phenomenon. It happens without any hindrance..."

*Source: UNFPA supported study on "Adverse Sex Ratio in Rajasthan"
Submitted on behalf of Women's Resource Centre, Jaipur
By Indian Institute for Rural Development, Jaipur, Rajasthan*

At what cost...

Mr. and Mrs. Ravi have 3 children. Their eldest daughter is 23 years old, a second daughter is 21, and a son is 10. Before delivering their son, Mrs. Ravi undertook 9 sex determination tests and had 8 pregnancies medically terminated.

She died two days after giving birth to their son. Her doctor had advised her not to get pregnant, as it could pose a threat to her life. Mr. Ravi is a senior executive in a multi-national company and the late Mrs. Ravi was a teacher in a public school.

*Source: UNFPA supported study on
"Infanticide in Rajasthan - Causes and Practices"
Submitted on behalf of Women's Resource Centre, Jaipur
By VIHAAN, Society for Child Development in Rajasthan*

LAW PROHIBITS SEX SELECTION

The National Population Policy (2000) aims at gender balanced population stabilisation but also underscores a need for addressing issues such as child survival, maternal health, and contraception, while increasing the provision and outreach of education, extending basic amenities such as sanitation, safe drinking water and housing, besides empowering women and enhancing their employment opportunities.

The Pre-natal Diagnostic Techniques (Regulation and Prevention of Misuse) Amendment Act, 2002 came into force with effect from 14 February 2003. The Pre-natal Diagnostic Techniques (Regulation and Prevention of Misuse) Act, 1994 now stands renamed as "The Pre-conception and Pre-natal Diagnostic Techniques (Prohibition of Sex Selection) Act."

The Act provides for the prohibition of sex selection, before or after conception. It regulates, though does not deny, use of pre-natal diagnostic techniques, such as ultrasound, for the purposes of detecting genetic abnormalities or other sex-linked disorders in the foetus. The purpose is to prevent misuse of such techniques for sex determination that could eventually lead to elimination of the female foetus and thereby create a gender imbalanced society.

Under the Act, the person who seeks help for sex selection can face, at first conviction, imprisonment for a 3-year period and be required to pay a fine of Rs. 50,000. The State Medical Council can suspend the registration of the medical practitioner involved and, at the stage of conviction, can remove his/her name from the register of the Council.

The data used from the 2001 Census is provisional and the analysis of the child sex ratio is based on the provisional results of Census 2001.

Maps included in this publication are based upon Survey of India map with the permission of the Surveyor General of India.

Territorial waters of India extend into the sea to a distance of twelve nautical miles measured from the appropriate base line. The inter-state boundaries between Arunachal Pradesh, Assam and Meghalaya shown on maps are as interpreted from the North-Eastern Areas (Reorganisation) Act, 1971, but have yet to be verified.



Office of the
Registrar General
and Census
Commissioner, India



सत्यमेव जयते
Ministry of
Health and Family
Welfare



United Nations
Population Fund

June 2003